



Take 5

For Safety



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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Safe spa days

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For many people, one of life's little pleasures is sinking into the warm, bubbling oasis of a hot tub or spa, where worries and cares seem to melt away. With a regard for basic safety and a dose of common sense, hot tubbing can be a very healthy and rewarding method of winter relaxation.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer the following tips for an enjoyable and safe hot tub experience:

- Heed hot tub rules for safe and healthy use.
- Refrain from entering a hot tub when you have diarrhea.
- Avoid swallowing hot tub water or even getting it into your mouth.
- Shower or bathe with soap and water before entering a hot tub.
- Observe posted limits on the maximum allowable number of bathers.
- Prohibit children younger than 5 years of age from using hot tubs.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before and during hot tub use.
- If pregnant, consult a physician before using a hot tub, particularly during the first trimester.
- Keep all lamps, fans, radios, televisions and other electrical devices at least five feet from the hot tub.
- Keep dry towels handy and install a nonskid surface around the spa's perimeter to reduce slips and falls.
- Observe and listen to the hot tub and its surroundings. In particular, look for:

- **Odors.** A well-chlorinated hot tub has little odor. A strong chemical smell indicates a maintenance problem.
- **Smooth sides.** Tiles should not be sticky or slippery.
- **Working equipment.** You should be able to hear the pump and filtration systems in operation.
- **Temperature.** Water temperature should not exceed 104 F (40 C).
- **Chemical balance.** Test for adequate free chlorine (two to four parts per million) or bromine (four to six ppm) and pH (7.2 to 7.8) levels. Pool and hot tub disinfectant test strips are available at local home improvement stores, discount retailers and pool supply stores. If you want to practice using the strips at home, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/pool-spa-test-strip-instructions.html>.

Because hot tubs are warmer than pools, chlorine and other disinfectants used to kill germs break down faster; in turn, the risk of spa-related infections goes up. To reduce the risk of rash and other infections, remove and rinse swimsuits thoroughly and shower with soap and water after leaving the hot tub.

For more information, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

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